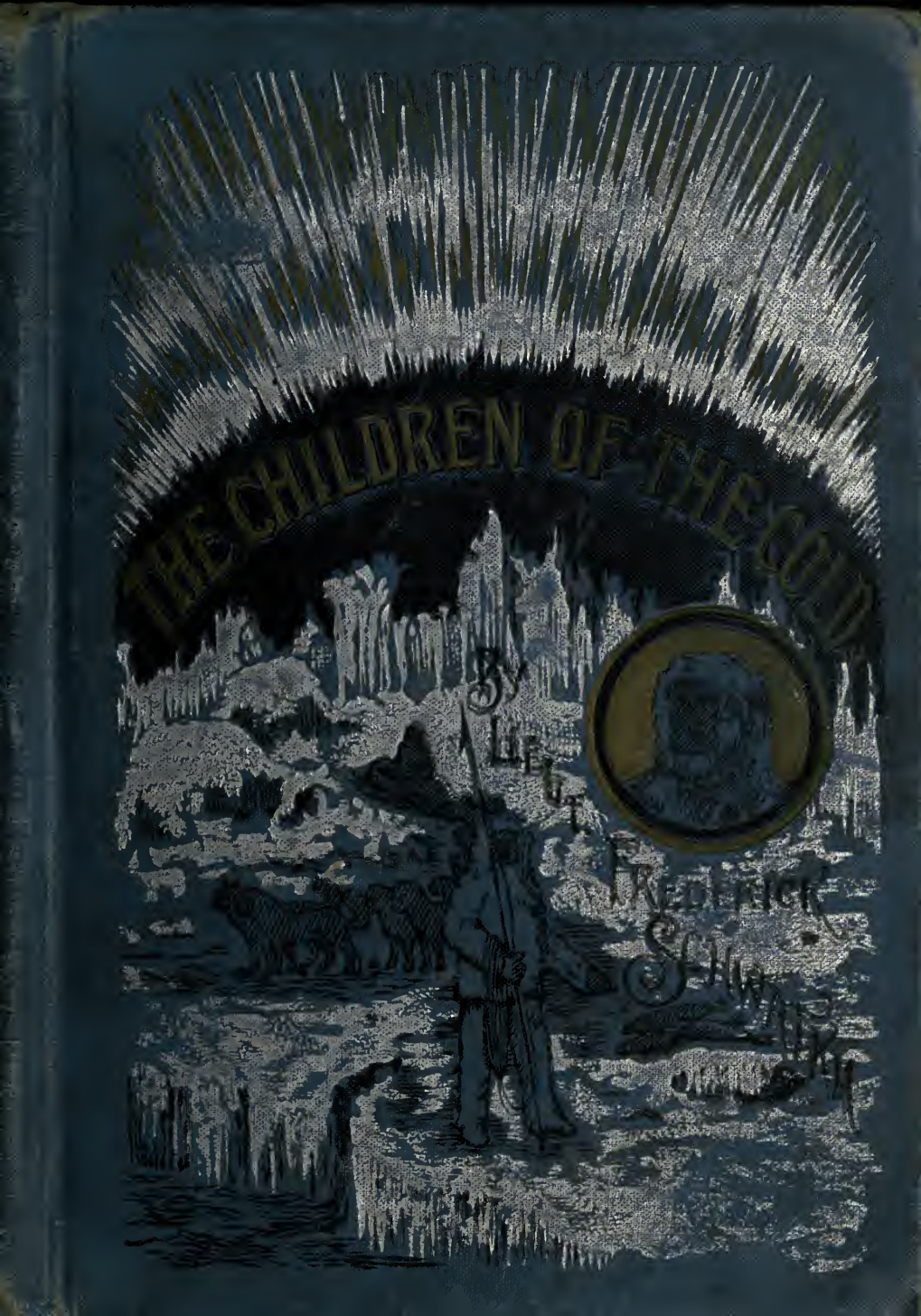
THE CHILDREN OF THE COURT
BY
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FREDERICK
SCHWATKA

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THE CHILDREN OF THE COLD

BY

FREDERICK SCHWATKA, 1849–1892.

Author of "Along Alaska's Great River," "Nimrod in the North, or Hunting and Fishing Adventures in the Arctic Regions," etc., etc.

NEW EDITION

EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

BOSTON

NEW YORK CHICAGO SAN FRANCISCO

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CHAPTER I.

WHERE AND HOW THEY LIVE.

AWAY up near the North Pole, in that very coldest portion of the earth's surface known as the Arctic Regions; where the sun can never get very high above the horizon, although for a part of the year it does shine all day and nearly all night; where for the rest of the year it scarcely shines at all, and where, therefore, the climate is dreary, cold, and cheerless the whole year round, there live a great many people—men and women,

boys and girls, and little bits of babies. And, though to us their country seems about the most dismal part of the world it is possible to find, yet they really are the most happy, cheerful, and merry people on the globe, hardly thinking of the morrow, and spending the present as pleasantly as possible.

These cheerful people, in their cheerless country of ice and snow, must, like all of us, at an early time of their life have been babies, and to describe these Arctic babies is the main object of this book—to tell the boys and girls what kind of toys and pleasures and picnics and all sorts of fun may be had where you would hardly think any could be had at all; also, some of the discomforts of living in this most uncomfortable country.

Right near the pole, where day and

night are five or six months long, and where it is so very, very cold, none of these people live, as there are no animals for them to kill and live upon; but around about the outer edge of this region—that is, in the Arctic circle, and sometimes far back along the sea-coast—the greater part of them are to be found.

All over Arctic America, as you will see it in your geography, these people are of one kind, speaking nearly the same language, and very much alike in other respects. They are called the *Eskimo;* or, as the name is sometimes spelled, *Esquimaux.* All over Arctic Europe and Asia (looking again at your geography), there are scattered many tribes of these people, speaking different languages, and differing in many other respects.

As I lived for a time among the former,

the Eskimo, my descriptions will apply only to that nation, and only to those parts which I visited; for when you looked at your geography, if you did so carefully, you must have seen that the Arctic part of North America was an immense tract of land reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, across the widest part of America, and that it would take a single traveler almost a long life-time to see all the Eskimo and study carefully their homes, habits, and customs. I did not merely live in a ship or a tent or house of my own *alongside* the tents and huts of the natives, and from there occasionally visit them; but I, with my little party of three other white men, lived for two years in Eskimo tents and huts, so that we made these savages' homes our own.

After a while, these Eskimo began to consider us a part of their own tribe, gave us Eskimo names, by which we were known among the tribe, invited us to participate in their games and amusements, and in cases of direst want, when their superstitions drove them to their singular rites and ceremonies to avert the threatened dangers, they even asked us to join in using our mysterious influence. We four white men did not live in the same snow-hut all the time, but for many months were living apart from each other in the different snow houses of the natives themselves, and this did much to make the natives feel kindly toward us. We made sledge journeys among them away from our home for many months, taking their best hunters with us, and found many other natives who had never before

seen any white men; and when there seemed to be any danger from the wily tricks and stratagems of these wilder savages, the members of the tribe with which we lived would, as far as they could, tell us all about it and consult with us as to defense, just as if we were their brothers, and not white men, wholly different from them, while the ones they were thus plotting against were Eskimo, like themselves.

Their little children, too, played with us and around us, just as if our faces were a few shades darker and we were truly their own kind; and as it is of them you naturally desire to hear, you can see that we were in a position to find out by long experience what can be told you about them.

As soon as little Boreas (as we shall

call the Eskimo baby) is born, and indeed until he is able to walk, he is always to be found on his mother's back when she is out of doors or making visits to other houses. All of the Eskimo's clothes are made of reindeer skins, so nicely dressed that they are as soft and limber as velvet, and warmer than any clothes you have ever seen anywhere, even than the nice, warm sealskin sacks and muffs that American ladies wear in winter. They have two suits of this reindeer clothing, completely covering them : the inner suit with the reindeer's fur turned toward the body, and the outer one with the hair outside like a sealskin sack. The coats have hoods sewed tightly on their collars, so that when they are put on, only the eyes, nose and mouth are exposed to the cold.

When Boreas's mother makes the hood for her reindeer suit, she stretches it into a long sack or bag, that hangs down and is supported by her shoulders, and this bag of reindeer's skin is little Boreas's cradle and home, where he lives until he knows how to walk, when he gets his own first suit of clothing. When Boreas gets very cold, as when he is out of doors in an Arctic winter's day with the bitter, cold wind blowing—when he gets so very cold that he commences crying about it—his mother will take him out of the bag and put him on her back under both her coats, where he will be held by a lot of sealskin strings passing back and forth under him and around his mother's shoulders over her dress; and there he will be very warm, directly against her body and under her two fur

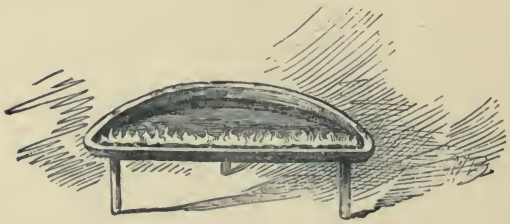
coats, besides the four thicknesses of the hood wherein he was riding before.

This, as I have already said, is while little Boreas is out-of-doors or his mother

LITTLE BOREAS AND HIS MOTHER.

is making a social visit. When at his own home, in order not to trouble his mother while she is sewing or cooking or doing such other work, the little baby is allowed to roll around almost without

clothing, among the reindeer skins that make the bed, where it amuses itself with any thing it can lay its hands on, from a hatchet to a snow-stick. This stick is much like a policeman's club, and is used for knocking snow off of the reindeer clothes; for when the Eskimo come in-



AN ESKIMO LAMP.

doors, they all take off their outside suit and beat it with this stick, to rid it of the snow that covers them.

You doubtless think little Boreas should have a nice time rolling around to his heart's content on the soft, warm reindeer skins; but when I tell you more

about his little home, you may not then think so. It is so cold in the Arctic country in the winter that no timber can grow at all, just as it never grows on the cold summits of the very high snow-covered mountains. Sometimes the Eskimo, by trading with the whale-ships, get wood enough to make the sledges or the spear-handles with which they kill seal and walrus, but not enough to build houses. Sometimes they pick up a little on the bleak sea-beach, where the ocean currents have brought it for many hundreds of miles from warmer climates; but they have no tools, and they do not know how to cut the wood into boards if they had the tools. Never having seen any timber growing as in our woods and forests, they have to make guesses where it comes from. One tribe I met thought the logs

they occasionally found, grew at the bottom of the sea, and when the tree reached nearly to the surface of the water, its top became caught and frozen in the thick ice, and in the summer, when the ice broke up, the tree was pulled up by the roots and floated to the nearest shore.

Now, as little Boreas's father has neither wood nor mortar to use on the stones, he is rather at a loss, you think, for building material. But, no. He takes the very last thing you would think of choosing to make a house from in a cold winter. *That is, he builds his winter home of snow.*

"But won't the snow melt and the house tumble in?" you will ask. Of course it will, if you get it warmer than just the coldness at which water freezes; but during the greater part of the year it

is so cold that the snow will not melt, even when the Eskimo burn fire in their stone lamps inside these snow houses; so, by closely regulating the amount of the fire, they can just keep the snow from melting. Their stone lamps look like large clam-shells, the shell holding the oil, and the flame being built along the straight, shallow edge, while the wicking is the moss they gather from the rocks. In short, it must always be cold enough in their home to freeze.

So you can see that little Boreas can not have such a very nice time, and you can't see how in the world he can be almost naked nearly all day long when it is so cold. But such is the fact. Think of taking the baby of your house out for a walk or a ride in the park when the leaves have all fallen, the ground covered with

snow, and the ice forming on the lake, and the little baby almost unclothed at that, and then you can imagine what the Eskimo baby has to go through.

Yet, in spite of all this, little Boreas really enjoys himself. He gets used to the cold, and has great fun frolicking around on the reindeer skins and playing with his toys; and when I have told you some other stories about the cold these little folks can endure, you can understand how they can enjoy themselves in the snow huts, or *igloos*, as they call them, when it is only a little colder than freezing.

At times, the fire will get too warm in the snow house, and then the ceiling will commence melting—for you all perhaps have learned at school that when a room becomes warmed it is warmer at the ceil-

INSIDE THE IGLOO.

ing and cooler near the floor. So with the hut of snow; it commences melting at the top because it is warmer there—and when two or three drops of cold water have fallen on little Boreas's bare shoulders, his father or mother finds that it is getting too warm, and cuts down the fire.

When the water commences dropping, the mother will often take a snow-ball from the floor, where it is colder than freezing, and stick it against the point where the water is dripping. There it freezes fast and soaks up the water just like a sponge until it becomes full; and then she removes it and puts on another, as soon as it commences to drip again. Sometimes she will forget to remove it, and when it gets soaked and heavy with water and warm enough to lose its freez-

ing hold, down it comes! perhaps right on Boreas's bare back, where it flattens out like a slushy pancake—or into his face, as it once served me. For one of these snow-balls about the size of my fist fell plumb into a tin-cup full of soup just as I was about drinking from it, and splashed half of the soup in my face. Once or twice I have seen these slushy snow-balls fall down the back of a person sitting upon the bed; and when the cold slush gets in between the skin and the reindeer coat—well, you can easily believe that it does not feel agreeable.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THEIR HOUSES ARE BUILT.

IF, when you cut your boiled egg in two at breakfast (if you are not breakfasting with a French aristocrat, who never cuts, but only chips, his egg), and have taken out the meat, you will put the two shells, rims down, on the table, you will have a miniature representation of a couple of Eskimo snow huts or winter homes. The fuller shell, or big end of the egg, will represent an *igloo* during the coldest weather,

when the snow is frozen hard and firm, and it can be built flat without danger of falling in, and can thus be made much more comfortable. The pointed shell, or little end of the egg, will represent an *igloo*, as it must be built in the early fall or late in the spring,

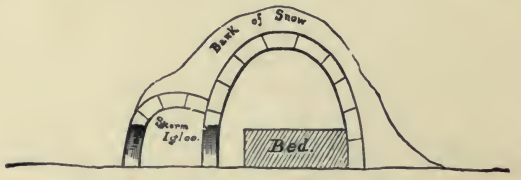


DIAGRAM OF THE PLAN OF THE ESKIMO SNOW-HUT, OR IGLOO.

when it is getting warm and the *igloo* is liable to melt and tumble in.

If through a hole in the top you pour your model about one-third full of water and plaster of Paris, mixed, or melted wax, or something that will harden, and when it has hardened, if you take a knife

"STANDING ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF THE BED."

and cut *down* through it so as to take off about a third, what is left will represent the bed, as in illustration which, you see, occupies nearly the whole of the room. Curious as it may seem, this bed is also built of snow, but enough reindeer robes, bear and musk-ox skins are placed over it to keep the warmth of the body from melting the bed.

If with a lead-pencil you draw a continuous spiral line on the egg-shell, far enough apart so that there will be four or five lines from bottom to top directly above each other, and then if you draw lines about twice as far apart as these almost horizontal ones, but broken so as to represent brick-work, each little block that you thus represent is a snow-block of which the *igloo* is built. The real snow-blocks are about three feet long,

about a foot and a-half wide, and six inches to a foot thick, which would, of course, make the thickness of the *igloo* itself. A row of these is laid on the ground, the long edge down, in the shape of a circle, and this is continued around, just as on your egg-shell, until the snow house is built, the last snow-block, of course, being then perfectly horizontal. They make most of the *igloos* just so high that, when standing on the floor in front of the bed, their heads will not be bumping against the roof, although it is hard to tell just where the house-walls stop and the roof commences. When they build their snow houses to live in a long time, however, they make them higher and flatter in the roof than when they are to be used for one or two nights only; for it must be remembered that their

igloos in the winter time serve them the same use as tents wherever they travel, the smaller kind taking them, if they are industrious, but about an hour to build—no one, not even an Eskimo, being able to live in a tent in the coldest weather of these polar regions.

Just in front of the bed, and not much higher, is the little door-way, where the occupants enter the house. In order to do so they must get down flat on their hands and knees and crawl in. To prevent the snow from the top of the door-way brushing off and falling down the neck and back, each Eskimo puts his skin hood over his head before entering, and just as soon as his shoulders are well in the house he shoves the legs back and begins to straighten up so as to prevent running his nose square into the snow of

which the bed is made. So you will see that the *igloo* is lacking very much in the "elbow room" which the homes in warmer climates have; but, nevertheless, the lonely Eskimo and his little boy Boreas seem perfectly happy with the home they have, and wonder how in the world any person could wish for any more. The door for this entrance-way is nothing but a big block of snow stuck in the little hole which may be called the door-way, and is used as much to keep out the dogs as it is to keep out the cold. A small *igloo* of snow is often built in front of the door (as shown in the picture on page 37), to prevent the wind from getting in easily, and this little storm *igloo* is always full of dogs, who crowd in here to keep away from the sharp, biting wind. The Eskimo dogs, however, will

sleep right out on the hard-frozen snow banks, if they have plenty to eat, and never seem to mind it, even though the ice on the lakes and rivers may have frozen to a thickness of six or eight feet.

And now, as the Eskimo dogs have been mentioned, you boys who have a favorite Carlo or Nero at home will wish to know about those Arctic dogs; asking what I mean by plenty to eat, and whether, like your own favorites, they get three meals a day and any number of intermediate lunches. No doubt you will think that they really should get ever so much more on account of their hard work in pulling the sledges, and in such a cold country. Yet, hard as it may seem, the Eskimo dog never gets fed oftener than every other day, and generally about every third day; while

in times of want and starvation in that terrible country of cold, the length of time these poor dogs will go without food seems beyond belief.

I once had a team of nineteen fat Eskimo dogs that went six or seven days between meals for three consecutive feedings before they reached the journey's end and good food; and, although they all looked very thin, and were, no doubt, very weak, none of them died; and yet they had been traveling and dragging a heavy sledge for a great part of the time. Other travelers among the Eskimo have given equally wonderful accounts of their powers of fasting. The Eskimo have many times of want and deprivation, and then their poor dogs must suffer very much. But when they are fed every other day on good fat walrus

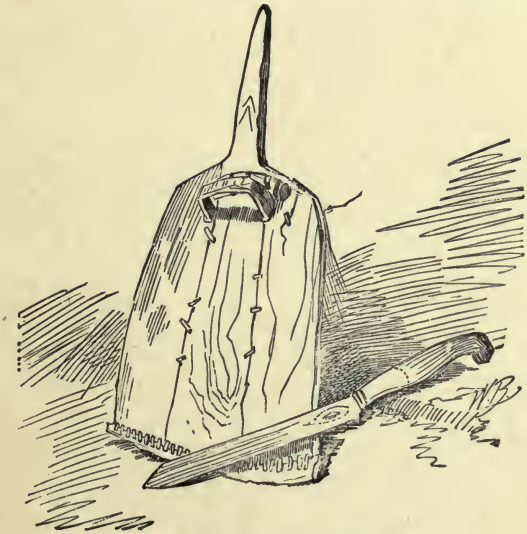
AN IGLOO AS SEEN FROM THE OUTSIDE

meat, and do not have too much hard work to do, they will get as fat and saucy and playful as your own dogs with three meals a day. One of the very last things you would imagine to be good for them is the best food they get; that is, tough walrus hide, about an inch in thickness, and as wiry as sole-leather. Give your team of dogs a good meal of this before they start, take along a light supply of it for them, and you can be gone a couple of weeks on a trip; when you get back, feed them up well, and they will be as fat and strong as ever in a few days.

But to return to the *igloo*. The blocks of snow of which the house is made are, it has been said, from six inches to a foot in thickness; but after the house is thus made strong—for a heavy man can climb

or walk right over it without tumbling it in—the native architects throw a deep bank of loose snow over it all, burying it in a covering of snow from a foot to three feet thick ; so you can see that there is a good thick wall between little Boreas inside his home and the cold weather outside. This snow is thrown up with great wide shovels of wooden boards, dextrously sewed together with reindeer sinew, and the handle in the center made of a curved piece of musk-ox horn. The inner edge of the shovel, which would soon wear off digging in the hard, frozen snows is protected by a tip made from the toughest part of a reindeer's horn. A snow-shovel is always carried by the Eskimo on their travels. The knives with which they cut the blocks of snow are like great long-bladed butcher-

knives, with handles of wood long enough to be grasped easily and firmly with both hands. Sometimes they use a



AN ESKIMO KNIFE AND SNOW SHOVEL.

saw where they can get it by trading with the sailors who come into certain parts of their seas to catch whales, walrus and seals.

But will not every one under such a

thick house of snow, with the snow-door tightly fastened up to keep out the dogs and cold, smother to death for want of fresh air? And if they do not smother, where does the fresh air come from? The frozen snow is about as porous as white sugar, and all boys and girls know they can draw in air through a lump of it, or, if they do not know it, they can try the experiment. Well, in the same way, the cold air from the outside passes very slowly through the thick snow wall as fast as the people inside use up that in the *igloo*; not so fast but that they can warm it with their little stone lamps as it comes in, unless there is a strong gale of wind on the outside to blow it through. I was at one time in a very thick *igloo*, probably four feet through, but the snow was very hard and

sandy, and would not pack down well, and as there was a very heavy wind blowing at the time, the *igloo* was so cold that we all had to go to bed under the thick reindeer robes to keep warm. Holding a burning candle near the wall of snow on the side from which the gale was coming, the flame was bent over nearly one-third or half way toward the center of the *igloo.*

If the *igloo* becomes very warm inside by the lamp's using up too much of the air, the heat ascends to the top and soon cuts its way through the soft snow in the chinks of the snow-blocks, and these little chimneys soon afford a sufficient amount of fresh air. If they give too much, they are "chinked up" with a handful of snow taken from the front of the snow bed.

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE BOREAS'S PLAYTHINGS.

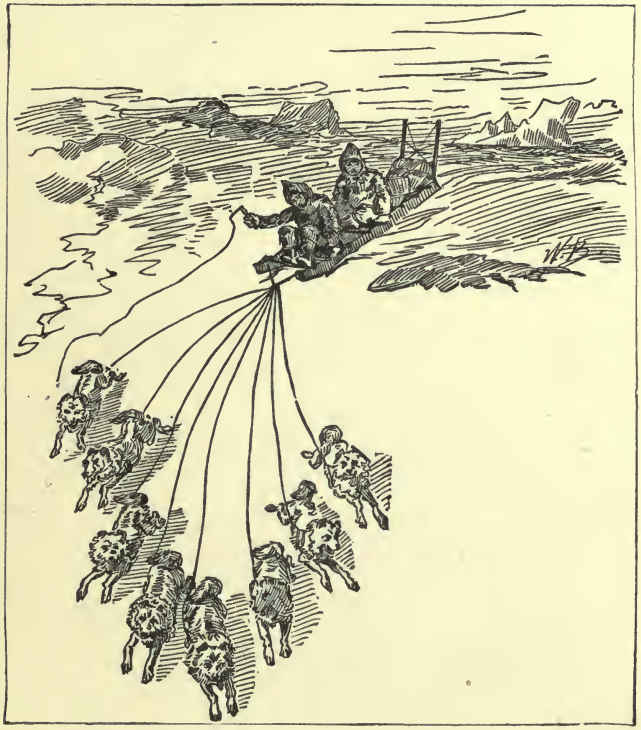
NOW that you know all about little Boreas's home, let us find out what he has been doing. We left him rolling about on the reindeer skins of the snow bed, in a house built of snow, where it must nearly always be below freezing to prevent the house from melting down. Well, as the Eskimo must sometime be babies, so the dogs must at sometime be puppies, and the puppies are allowed inside the *igloo* on the bed, where they

are the favorite playthings of the young heir. His mother makes him a number of doll dog-harnesses for the puppies, fixes him up a dog-whip almost like his father's, and then he amuses himself harnessing them, hitching them to a hatchet, the water-bucket, or any object that is at hand, and driving them around in the *igloo* and storm *igloo*, or out of doors, when the weather is very pleasant.

By this time, of course, little Boreas is able to walk, and he has a nice suit of clothes for outdoor wear, made of the softest skins of the reindeer fawns, trimmed with rabbit and eider-duck skin. As soon as the puppies get a little bigger, the larger boys take them in hand, and by the time they are old enough to be used for work in the

sledges, they are almost well-trained dogs without knowing just when their schooling commenced.

And so with little Boreas; when he gets older he takes the dogs his younger brother finds unmanageable and trains them, and by the time he is a young man, he is a good dog-driver, and knows how to manage a sledge under all circumstances. This is the hardest thing that an Eskimo has to learn. I have known white men to equal them in rowing in their little seal-skin canoes; I have seen white men build good *igloos;* but I have never seen a white man who was a good dog-driver; and the Eskimo told me that they had never seen such an one either. When they drive their dogs, it is in the shape of a letter V, the foremost dog being at the converging point, and the



AN ESKIMO TEAM OF DOGS.

harness traces running back in V-shape to the sledge, as shown in the accompanying sketch. The forward dog is called the "leader," or "chief," and in trading dogs, a "leader" is worth two good followers, or ordinary workers. The Eskimo dog-driver manages the leader wholly by the voice, making him stop, go ahead, to the right, or to the left, as he may speak to him; and as he acts, so do the others, who soon learn to watch him closely, and strangest of all, to obey him even after they are unharnessed, although "the leader" may not be one of the largest and strongest dogs in the team.

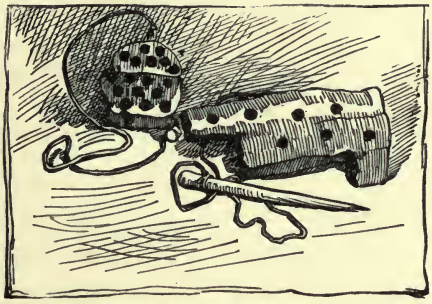
The Eskimo children have but few toys, and these are only of the rudest kind. Yet it is surprising to see the amount of enjoyment they get from

these trifling affairs, so easily are they amused.

One of the most common toys that I found in use among them was called *noo-glook-took* or *noo-glook-tahk*, or, as it might be called in our language, "Pin and Cup-ball." On page 53 is seen an end and side view of the toy. It consists of two pieces, generally of walrus ivory, united by a string of reindeer sinew about six inches long. The ivory or wooden pin is about as long as the fore-finger, and its smaller end is sharpened to about the size of a knitting-needle. One end of the ivory "cup-ball" is bored as full of holes as possible, and the object of the game is simply to impale the "cup-ball" on the pin by thrusting the latter in one of the holes. This is done, as shown in the illustration, by

ESKIMO CHILDREN PLAYING WITH THE PIN AND CUP-BALL.

swinging the "cup-ball" backward and forward once or twice and then bringing



PIN AND CUP-BALL.

it around with a gentle sweep, the end containing the holes being turned toward the pin.

Simple as this little toy is, it requires considerable dexterity and skill to make the run of a number of successful points, which is often accomplished by a little Eskimo. Sometimes he will swing it completely around two or three times, alternating on different sides of the hand, and an expert player will in this

manner swing it so rapidly that it looks like a revolving buzz-saw, and will then, with a sharp crack, impale it on the pin. I remember that I tried it once, and brought the heavy ivory ball so sharply against the end of my thumb-nail that it stung for half an hour after. The most expert, however, will always succeed in sticking it on the pin, or in catching it on the pin's point between the holes, so that the ball will bounce back. A number of holes are also cut obliquely in the sides of the ball, as shown on page 53, so that if it flies sidewise it may be caught by the pin through one of these; and, in fact, those who desire to show unusual skill try to impale the ball on one of these side holes. Should they fail in this endeavor, the thumb-nail or thumb-joint usually gets a whack that makes

the player squirm for some time; but, with that indifference to bodily pain so characteristic of savages, they go right on with their play, notwithstanding the hurt. In a village of half a dozen families, you will nearly always see a group of little children, especially the girls, twirling away at this game. As soon as one misses they pass it on to the next, the number of successful catches showing who is victor for that particular round.

A MUSK-OX CUP.

Another childish amusement is to take one of the musk-ox cups, shown on this page, and, partially filling it with soup or stew, whirl it around upon a board or flat rock in the center of a group collected to play the game; the person to whom

the handle of the cup points when it has stopped turning is the victor, and can appropriate the contents of the cup. This game is not so much played by the children as by the old women of the tribe, and I am sorry to say that this simple game is often used by them as a means of gambling. When the person to whom the handle has pointed has taken out the article placed in the cup (or alongside it, if it be too large), some other article must be placed in it or alongside it, and a brisk twirl is then given it that sends it spinning around again for four or five times before it settles to a rest and the handle designates the new victor. I have said this is a kind of gambling, because the lucky one often puts in the musk-ox horn cup things much more valuable than are

taken out, the only idea of value among the Eskimo being the present necessity for an article. A needle that is wanted for use immediately is more valuable in their eyes than the horn cup which holds it, although it may have taken them a month to make the cup.

The making of these curious cups of musk-ox horn is worth relating. If my readers will look in some well-illustrated book on natural history, they will see that the horn of a musk-ox, as it approaches his head, commences to flatten out in a wide plate that is crimpled at the edges. The Eskimo take this widened base of the musk-oxen's horn, boil it in their kettles, and then scrape it with knives to get it into the proper thickness, after which it is bent in the shape seen in the illustration, and is then

left to dry. Little toy ones are often made for the babies to play with, but most of them are large and hold from a pint to a couple of quarts. The little girls often play with the *im-moo-sik*, as they call this cup, the victor's winnings being a little bit of soup poured into the cup.

Another game, also called *noo-glook-took*, is played by the men and boys. A piece of walrus ivory, about as long as the forefinger and probably a little larger in diameter, is pierced near the middle with holes running entirely through, and as thickly placed as can be without cutting it in two. Through each extremity is passed a stout sinew string, one end of which holds it fast to the roof of the *igloo*, or tent, while the other is tied to some heavy object, as a walrus's skull or

"NOO-GLOOK-TOOK," AS PLAYED BY MEN AND BOYS.

a stone, which acts as a weight and keeps both strings taut.

Some member of the playing party then puts up something as a prize—a pair of walrus's tusks, or perhaps, a reindeer coat. The players, who stand in a circle around the perforated ivory cylinder, arm themselves with long, sharpened sticks, with points small enough to enter the holes (such as seal spears with the barbs removed, or iron ramrods), and are then ready to commence; and as the prize-giver gives a sudden shout of "Yi! Yi!" they all begin jabbing at the holes. Finally, some lucky fellow succeeds in thrusting the point of his stick, spear, or ramrod through one of the holes, when he loudly shouts "Yi! Yi!" and pushes the cylinder aside to show that he is winner, and the jabbing

ceases. The victor now puts up some new prize—a musk-ox robe, or a sledge dog, or a seal-skin line—and the game goes on as usual until all are ready to stop. This is a favorite game during the long winter evenings when food is plentiful and every body is merry.

Many of the little Eskimo girls have dolls, dressed very much like themselves, and made entirely by their own hands. The face is of tanned seal-skin, about as black as their own, two round beads being sewed in for eyes and a couple of long ones for nose and mouth. The rest of the doll is clothed in reindeer skin, the same as its little mistress when she is out in the winter's cold. The little Eskimo girls do not seem to take as kindly to their dolls or to derive as much amusement from their assumed

care and trouble with them as do our little girls of the temperate zone. They seem to prefer other and rougher enjoyments.

AN ESKIMO DOLL.

I give here a picture of a doll, which was given me by a little Eskimo girl, in return for a present that I had made her, as is the usual Eskimo custom; and I think my little girl readers, when they see its hideous countenance, with its glistening bead eyes and straight bead nose, and especially the fierce grimace of its straight bead mouth, will cease to wonder why

their Eskimo sisters do not grow enthusiastic over their dolls. In fact, I can readily imagine that most of you will say that you don't see how in the world they can like them at all. The face of the doll's hood is trimmed with black fur, taken from the back of the reindeer. The rest of the dress, except a little trimming around the bottom of the coat, is made of white reindeerfur, taken from the flanks of the animal. The belt is of black seal-skin, secured by a brass-headed tack, and the gloves of dark-colored reindeerfur. The stockings are made from the flat glossy fur taken from the legs of a young reindeer, and many of these show very creditable ornamentation, considering the limited display of colors to be found on a single reindeer skin. Over the feet are drawn seal-skin

leather slippers, securely fastened by a puckering string, drawn tight and tied. These prevent the water from getting at the reindeer stockings, the fur of which would be spoiled by the moisture. Except for its hideous face, the Eskimo doll, queer as it looks to you, is generally a very good miniature representation of the Eskimo girl.

CHAPTER IV.

ESKIMO SLEDS—COASTING.

THE number of toys that represent articles of daily use, and which are so common among us, such as toy wagons, toy sleds, toy railroad trains, and a hundred others, are very limited among the Eskimo; and most of their amusements, as I have said, are confined to their simple games. If you should wish to make a toy sledge, you, of course, would need to have some wood to build it from. I have told you of

the scarcity of wood among the Eskimo, and what funny notions some of them have about timber growing on the bottom of the sea and the drifting ice breaking it off. Well, since wood is so scarce that all they can get must be utilized to

A SLED MADE OF ICE.

make their real sleds, harpoon and spear shafts, etc., leaving none or very little to be made into toy representations of these things, little Boreas looks elsewhere for material for his coasting sled; and he makes it of—what do you think?

—the very funniest material imaginable—*pure ice*, cut from the nearest lake or river.

If the sleds of ice, judging from the one in the illustration, seem rather bulky, they are much stronger than you would imagine, and the boys can coast downhill without breaking them, provided the changes in the slope are gradual and there are no stones or ice-hummocks protruding through the snow. Even the grown people occasionally use these primitive sledges when dragging their effects over the smooth salt-water ice near the shore-line of the sea. The snow-knife, which I represented among the tools that are used to build the *igloo*, or native snow house, is the implement employed to cut or chip out the ice-sledge. There is one advantage to be

found in this kind of a sledge that partially compensates for its great weight: the bottom of the sledge-runners are always perfectly smooth and slippery, being of pure ice; and when the sledge party is on hard and level snow, but little pulling is required—much less, in fact, than one would think—to make rapid progress with such a bulky and cumbersome vehicle.

So much easier will a sledge pull when it has runners of ice, that, in the Eskimo country, the ordinary wooden sledges always have the bottoms of their runners iced before they start on a day's sledge journey. First, the sledge runner is shod with a strip of bone cut from the lower jaw of a whale into a long, thin piece, like a batten, or small board, and a trifle wider than the runner. This is

made fast to the runner by thin thongs of whalebone. The sledge is thrown on its back, the slats being down, and the native sledgeman prepares the runners for the journey, by carefully icing them. He has a small bucket or musk-ox ladle full of water, and, picking up a piece of snow about as big as his fist, he dips it in the water to render it soft and slushy, and then presses the slushy mass over the bone shoe of the runner with the open palm of the hand until it is completely covered around and along the whole length of both runners. The open hand is kept working backward and forward over two or three feet of the runner's length, smoothing and leveling this opaque mass until it is frozen hard (a process which generally takes only about half a minute in cold weather);

then the operation is renewed farther on along the runner. The slushy snow being completely frozen, the next operation is to put on the ice itself. This is done by the sledgeman taking a big mouthful of water and, while he works the palm of his hand backward and forward very rapidly, slowly spurting the water over the frozen, slushy snow; this distributes the water evenly and smoothly, and the watery spray freezes almost as soon as it strikes the cold runner. Thus iced, it is really wonderful how much easier the sledge will run than when it is not so treated. My largest sledge was so heavy, even when unloaded, that I could hardly turn it over sidewise; yet, when Toolooah, my sledgeman, had carefully iced it, I could with one hand take this ponderous affair, weighing nearly half

a ton, and slide it backward and forward a distance of two or three feet without any unusual effort. If Toolooah iced the sledge on the side of a hill, and, thoughtlessly turning it over, allowed it to point downhill, away it would go like a frightened horse, unless it was stopped.

Our worst luck would be to have some half-hidden stone tear the ice from one of the runners, when it would drag as if a treble-sized load had been added. But whether little Boreas's sled be made of ice or wood he is nearly as fond of a sled-ride as the little boys in better climates, and probably would be found as often in the week enjoying one, if his winter time were as short; but as his winter is three or four times as long as ours, he grows tired of the sport, in time.

Most of the sled-rides of our boys are

on some of the nice sloping side-hills, while nearly all of those of little Boreas are behind well-trained dogs, which carry him along as fast as a pair of good horses. They go "coasting" quite often, however, if they can find a good hill for the purpose, which they can not always find, because most of the tops and ridges of the hills in their country are kept clear of the snow by the terrible gales of wind that they have so often.

One sport that amuses the Eskimo boys very much would probably be called in our language "reindeer hunting." Having found a long and gentle slope on a side-hill, they place along the bottom of the hill a number of reindeer antlers, or, as we sometimes incorrectly call them, deer-horns (for you boys must not forget that the antlers of a deer are not

horn at all, but bone.) These antlers of the reindeer are stuck upright in the snow, singly or in groups, in such a manner that a sled, when well guided, can be run between them without knocking any of them down, the number of open spaces between the groups being equal to at least the number of sleds. The quantity of reindeer antlers they can thus arrange will, of course, depend upon their fathers' success the autumn before in reindeer hunting; but there are nearly always enough antlers to give two or three, and sometimes five or six, to each fearless young coaster.

The boys with their sleds, numbering from four to six in a fair-sized village, gather on the top of the hill, each boy having with him two or three spears, or a bow with as many arrows. They start

REINDEER HUNTING.

together, each boy's object being to knock down as many antlers as possible and not be the first to reach the bottom of the hill. You can see that, in such a case, the slower they go when they are passing the antlers the better. They must knock over the antlers with their spears or arrows only, as those thrown down by the sledge or with the bow or spear in the hand do not count. They begin to shoot their arrows and throw their spears as soon as they can get within effective shooting distance; and, even after they have passed between the rows of antlers, the more active boys will turn around on their flying sleds and hurl back a spear or arrow with sufficient force to bring down an antler.

When all have reached the bottom of the hill, they return to the rows of ant-

lers, where each boy picks out those he has rightfully captured, and places them in a pile by themselves. Then those

A FAVORITE GAME.

accidentally knocked over by the sledges are again put up and the boys return for another dash down the hill, until all the antlers have been "speared." Some-

times there is but one antler left, and when there are five or six contesting sleds the race becomes very exciting, for then speed counts in reaching the antler first. When all are down, the boys count their winnings, and the victor is, of course, the one who has obtained the greatest number of antlers.

CHAPTER V.

FEEDING THE DOGS.

ONE of the first toys that little Boreas has is a small bow of whalebone or light wood; and sitting on the end of the snow bed he shoots his toy arrows, under the direction of his father or mother or some one else who cares to play with him, at something on the other side of the snow house. This is usually a small piece of boiled meat, of which he is very fond, stuck in a crack between the snow blocks; and if he hits

it, he is entitled to eat it as a reward, although little Boreas seldom needs such encouragement to stimulate him in his plays, so lonesome and long are the dreary winter days in which he lives buried beneath the snow.

These toy arrows are pointed with pins but he is also furnished with blunt arrows, and whenever some inquisitive dog pokes his head in the *igloo* door, looking around for a stray piece of meat or blubber to steal, little Boreas, if he shoots straight, will hit him upon the nose or head with one of the blunt arrows, and the dog will beat a hasty retreat. In this sense, the little Eskimo boy has plenty of targets to shoot at, for the *igloo* door is nearly always filled with the heads of two or three dogs watching Boreas's mother closely; and if she turns

her head or back for a moment, they will make a rush to steal something, and to get out as soon as possible, before she can pound them over the head with a club that she keeps for that purpose.

In these exciting raids of a half-dozen hungry dogs, little Boreas is liable to get, by all odds, the worst of the encounter. He is too small to be noticed, and the first big dog that rushes by him knocks him over; the next probably rolls him off the bed to the floor; another upsets the lamp full of oil on him; and while he is reeking with oil, another big dog, taking him for a seal-skin full of blubber, tries to drag him out, when his mother happens to rescue him after she has accidentally pommeled him two or three times with the club with which she is striking at the dogs;

LITTLE BOREAS SHOOTING AT THE DOGS

and if it were not for his hideous yelling and crying, one would hardly know what he is, so covered is he with dirt, grease, and snow. Thus the dogs occasionally have their revenge on little Boreas for whacking them over the nose with his toy arrows, although this is not their object in rushing into the *igloo*, for the real cause is their ravenous hunger.

The duty of feeding the dogs is often intrusted to the boys, and it is no easy work. The most common food for the dogs is walrus-skin, about an inch to an inch and a half thick, cut in strips each about as wide as it is thick, and from a foot to eighteen inches long. The dog swallows one of these strips as he would a snake; and it is so tough that when he has swallowed about twelve pieces, it is no great wonder that he does not want

any thing more for two days. Sometimes they cut the food up into little pieces inside the *igloo*, where the dogs can not trouble them, and then throw it out on the snow; but this is not altogether a good way; for then the little dogs get it all while the big dogs are fighting, for these big burly fellows are sure to have an unnecessary row over each feeding. If pieces too large to swallow at a gulp are thrown out, the large dogs get the food; and so, between the big dogs and the little ones, the Eskimo boys have a hard time making an equal distribution among the animals.

When they are anxious for a fair division, only one dog at a time is let into the *igloo*, a couple of boys standing at the door with sticks in their hands to prevent the other dogs from entering.

THE DOGS' DINNER-TIME

When it is pleasant weather out of doors they often build a semi-circular wall three or four snow blocks high, and behind this a couple of men cut up the meat, blubber or walrus-hide, and allow but one dog at a time to come in, three or four boys with long whips, their lashes fifteen or twenty feet in length, standing near the open part of the wall to keep the ravenous pack from making a raid. Once or twice I have known dogs to come bounding over the high wall, crushing in the snow blocks on the men who were chopping the meat, and stealing several pieces before the boys had finished beating the mingled dogs and men with their whips.

One winter night, I remember, while on our sledge-journey, returning to North Hudson's Bay, Toolooah was

feeding his dogs with no one to help him. He was on his knees near the *igloo* door, and throwing the bits to the various dogs, the heads of which were crowded in the entrance, and he was distributing the food as well as was possible under the circumstances. One big dog, which he could not distinguish in the dark entrance, and which, after it had received its share, had driven all the other dogs away, seemed determined not to leave. Toolooah grew angry, seized his stick, and rushed out after it to settle matters. But he came rushing back even faster than he went out, seized his gun hurriedly, and as hastily was gone again. Before we could collect our thoughts in order, or surmise what it all could mean, a shot was heard outside, and in a few seconds more Toolooah came crawling

in, dragging a big wolf after him, its white fangs showing in its black mouth in a way that made us shudder. This was the big dog Toolooah had been feeding, but it did not understand the customs of the Eskimo dogs well enough to know that it must stop eating when only half satisfied; and this ignorance cost it its life.

The wolves of the Arctic, by the way, are much larger, more powerful and ferocious than those seen in our country; and when pressed with hunger, they do not hesitate at all to make a meal off the Eskimo dogs, which they kill and eat at the very door of the *igloo*, if not prevented in some way. They are very much afraid of a bright light, however, and they will not come around a village or even a single *igloo* so long as they see

even a small flame, so that it is generally late in the night, when the lamp is burning low or has gone out, that they make their attacks on the dogs, four or five of them often killing or maiming two or three times as many dogs.

HUNTING THE MUSK-OX

CHAPTER VI.

SOME OUTDOOR SPORTS.

THE Eskimo boys have a way of playing at musk-ox hunting that is very vigorous and earnest. In April, 1879, when I was on a sledge-journey to King William's Land, we came upon a herd of musk-oxen that we had sighted the day before, and after running them with dogs for a mile or two, the herd was surrounded, or "brought to bay," as hunters would say, and a number of the musk-oxen killed. Of course we picked out

some of the handsomest robes and put them on our sledges, and the next day we proceeded on our journey. During that day we passed several musk-ox trails in the snow, and it was very clear that we were in a country where these animals were quite numerous. After going into camp that evening between two slight hills that sloped down to the lake, where we cut through the ice to get our fresh water, there was a time when it appeared that I was the only person out-of-doors; all of the rest of the people were inside the *igloos*, or snow huts, that had just been built, arranging the reindeer skins for the bedding for the night. Suddenly, I noticed one of our best hunting-dogs (we had forty-two dogs altogether) run excitedly over the hill, followed closely

by the remainder, one after the other. Then, to my great surprise, I saw two musk-oxen run down the farther ridge of the low hills; and the pack of howling, barking dogs soon brought them to bay on the ice of the lake not fifty yards from where the *igloos* were built. I acknowledge that I was nearly as much excited as the dogs over this strange and huge wild game, and I at once shouted in at the entrance of my own *igloo* to my best Eskimo hunter, Toolooah:

"*Oo-ming-muk! oo-ming-muk!!*"

(Musk-oxen! musk-oxen!!)

Toolooah seized his gun and ran to the top of the nearest ridge, about twenty yards away, followed by all the hunters in camp who had heard my outcry. And then the whole band of them sat down in a row on the ridge and

laughed until the air was full of the reindeer hair shaken from their coats in their convulsive mirth; for the two musk-oxen proved to be only two musk-ox robes that we had secured the day before, with a boy or two under each robe!

These boys had procured the musk-ox robes when the sledges were being unloaded, and had slipped away, unperceived by any one, while the men were building the snow houses. After wrapping the robes around them they had come down near the *igloos*, keeping on the *windward* side, or that side of the camp where the wind blowing on them must also pass over the camp. All my boy readers know that if game or wild animals thus pass near good hunting-dogs, the dogs will "scent"

ESKIMO BOYS PLAYING AT HUNTING THE MUSK-OX

them, as hunters would say. And so it was in this case; and as soon as they were "to windward" of the little snow village which we were building, our keenest-scented dog, *Parseneuk*, a beautiful, curly-haired, sharp-eared, lithe-built black fellow, that always led all chases after swift game, smelt the musk-ox robes, and —with his thoughts full of the day before, its exciting chase, and, better than all, its good fine meal of musk-ox meat—he dashed over the ridge to investigate. The result I have stated. The poor dog seemed as badly sold as I had been, for all the camp had been drawn out by the excitement and noise; and so long as the boys kept the shaggy robes over their shoulders and faces, and kept their backs together with their heads outward, as do the musk-oxen themselves when sur-

rounded and brought to bay by wolves or dogs, our dogs kept barking and snapping and jumping at them, evidently thinking they were genuine musk-oxen, and that there was a good prospect of another nice dinner if they only kept the oxen from running away until the hunters came up and killed them, as in the case of the real musk-oxen.

A musk-ox resembles a buffalo in appearance, except that the musk-ox has no "hump" on its shoulders, and the hair on its robe is two or three times as long as that on the buffalo (or American *bison*, as it should be called). In the wintertime this long hair reaches down beyond the knees almost to the hoofs, and when the musk-oxen are walking on the soft snow, they sink in so that you can not see their legs at all. It was this long

hair, hanging down so low as to almost cover the legs of the boys hidden underneath the robes, that had so helped to deceive me when I first saw them, and caused me to put the whole camp in an uproar and thereby fasten a very good joke on myself—a joke that clung to me a long time.

Toolooah, who was one of the most merry-hearted and best-natured young Esquimaux I ever saw, and who, as I have told you, was my best hunter, laughed until his sides were sore and his eyes were red; and for several weeks after that he would occasionally say "*oo-ming-muk!*" and laugh until the tears ran down his cheeks. It was not very often that they had a good joke on a white man, and this one they seemed to enjoy to their hearts' content.

But the musk-ox hunt is not over yet for the boys; in fact, the most exciting part is still to come. As soon as the mock musk-oxen are "brought to bay" by the excited and foolish dogs, the other boys get their bows and arrows and hurry to the spot, encouraging the dogs, which have now become furious and wild, and have formed a most ferocious circle around their supposed prey, all the more fierce where there is so unusual a number as forty-two dogs and but two musk-oxen. Then with their toy arrows, which are specially blunted for this rough play, the other boys pelt the dangling robes in an earnest way that must often make the boys under the robes smart with pain, so heavily do the blunted arrows *thud* against them; but these little savages expect their plays to be very rough,

and a whack over the knuckles that would break up a whole base-ball game of white boys, only brings out an emphatic "*I-yi!*" (their "ouch!") and the rough, harum-scarum game goes on. In a little while, the dogs seem to comprehend that there is some foolishness about the matter, and begin to drop off one by one, in the order of their ability to see through the joke, and finally the game dies a natural death for want of the dogs and the noise and excitement which contribute to it.

The boys' mock polar-bear hunt is so much like their musk-ox hunt that a few lines will describe it. One of the boys of the village gets a polar-bear robe, and wrapping it around him after he is out among the ice hummocks about the village, he comes crawling along some

sledge-path near the *igloos*, when he is discovered by the dogs and surrounded. This is likely to be much rougher sport than that of musk-ox hunting, for the boys take their spears and jab away at their brother in the bear robe, until you would think they would break some of his ribs; while the dogs, emboldened by these supposed brave advances, oftentimes take big bites of fur from the dangling edges of the robe. The mock bear rears up on his hind feet and growls in a very ferocious manner, until, worn out at last with his hard work and with having his head so tightly covered up with a heavy robe, he finally falls over at some thrust of a spear and pretends to expire. But the next moment he crawls out from the robe, much to the disgust of the dogs, with

their hopes of a fine meal of bear flesh.

It is no uncommon event for a polar bear to prowl along the ice-floes of the sea-coast, which is its favorite walk, until it finally stumbles on an Eskimo village; and if the dogs see it or smell it, it is very apt to be brought to bay near by, and then killed by some of the native hunters who have been alarmed by the noise and outcry. A fair fight on the open ice with a large polar bear is somewhat dangerous, for if severely wounded it may tear the hunter to pieces. The Eskimo seldom wound any dangerous animals, for, being a very brave people, —that is, personally brave—they generally go so close that, unless some accident with the fire-arms happens, the animal, whether it is bear or

musk-ox, is usually killed at the first shot.

I once found an old Eskimo hunter, however, in my camp in North Hudson's Bay, whose hair and scalp had been taken completely off by the bite of a wounded bear that he had endeavored to kill; and Toolooah once fired at a big bear, with too hasty an aim, hoping to save one of his dogs that the bear had under its paws. He only wounded the huge animal, which instantly charged him, and was only killed by a lucky shot just as it was close upon the hunter.

Toolooah told me that he has seen polar bears climb up places so steep and perpendicular that the natives could not follow them without cutting in the wall of ice niches wherein to put their hands and feet, and even in some instances, an

POLAR BEAR KILLING A WALRUS.

ice-wall so high that the hunters dared not attempt to climb it on account of the danger of slipping and killing themselves. A British explorer of the Arctic regions says that he once climbed to the top of an iceberg, and there found a big white bear sleeping away, in quiet possession. The bear, on discovering the party, jumped over the perpendicular side of the ice mountain, *fifty-one feet*, into the sea, and swam to the nearest land, which was more than twenty miles away.

The polar bears live on seal and walrus, crawling stealthily up to the former on the ice-floes and catching them; while of the walrus only the young are thus caught, for an old walrus is twice as big as Bruin. Some Arctic explorers, however—Captain Hall and Dr. Rae among

others—state that the bears sometimes surprise an old walrus by climbing above him on a precipitous hill, or the walls of an iceberg, and then taking stones or huge pieces of ice in their forepaws and throwing them with such force as to crack the walrus's skull as he lies asleep or at rest upon the ice. Then the bears spring down on the stunned walrus and finish him.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR

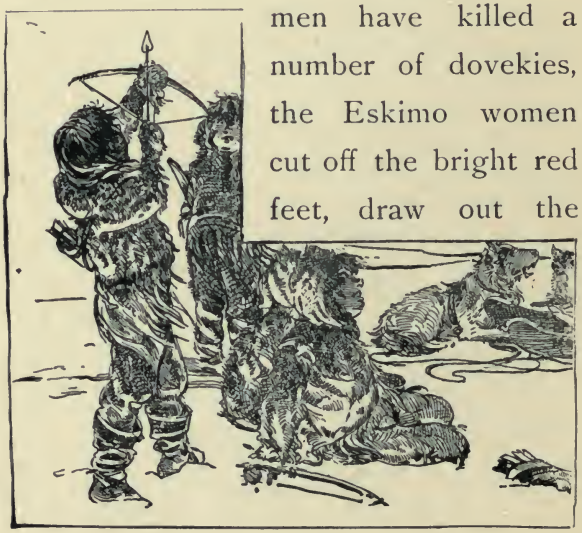
CHAPTER VII.

ESKIMO CANDY.

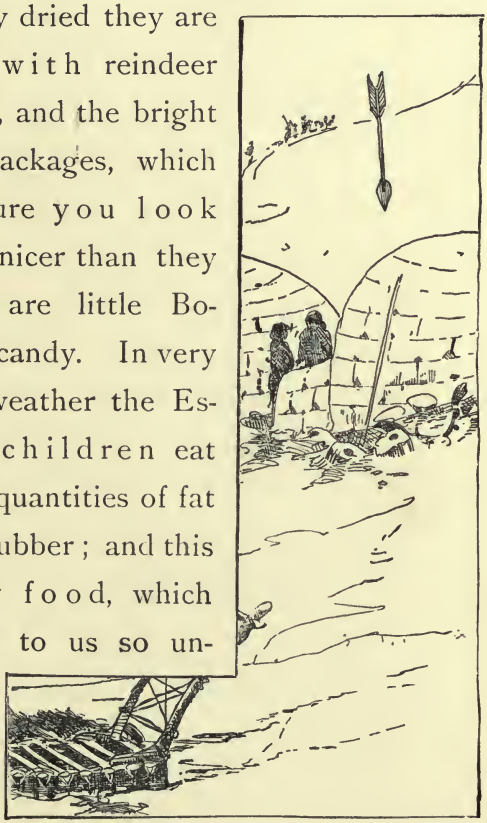
IT would seem very strange, and perhaps not very pleasant, to my young readers to hear a tallow candle or the shin-bone of a reindeer called candy. And yet these things may really be considered as Eskimo candy, because they would delight the children of the cold in precisely the way that a box of bon-bons would delight you.

There is a certain kind of water-fowl in Arctic countries known as the dovekie.

It is about the size of a duck, is quite black, has a prominent white stripe on its wings, and its webbed feet are of a brilliant red. When sitting in rows on the edge of some mossy, dark-green rock, these little red feet are very conspicuous, and, together with the white stripes on the wings, make the dovekie a very pretty bird. Sometimes, when the men have killed a number of dovekies, the Eskimo women cut off the bright red feet, draw out the



bones, and, blowing into the skins, distend them as much as possible so as to form pouches. When these pouches are thoroughly dried they are filled with reindeer tallow, and the bright red packages, which I assure you look much nicer than they taste, are little Boreas's candy. In very cold weather the Eskimo children eat great quantities of fat and blubber; and this fatty food, which seems to us so un-



inviting, helps to keep them warm and well.

The only other kind of candy that the Eskimo children have, is the marrow from the long leg or shin-bone of the slaughtered reindeer. Of this, also, they are very fond. Whenever a reindeer is killed and the meat has been stripped from the bones of the legs, these bones are placed on the floor of the *igloo* and cracked with a hatchet until the marrow is exposed. The bones are then forced apart with the hands, and the marrow is dug out of the ends with a long, sharp and narrow spoon made from a walrus's tusk. I have eaten this reindeer marrow frozen and cooked; and after one becomes accustomed to eating frozen meat raw, it is really an acceptable tidbit; while cooked and nicely served, it

would be a delicacy anywhere. Sometimes, if Toolooah was unusually lucky, he would have eight or ten reindeer on hand that he had killed during the day, and as each deer has eight leg-bones, from which the marrow can be extracted, quite a meal could be made from this very peculiar candy

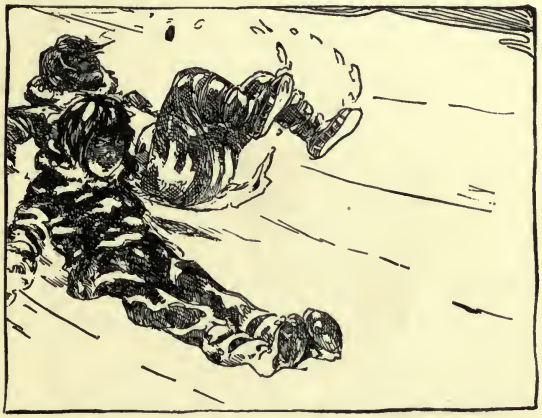
CHAPTER VIII.

ATHLETIC AMUSEMENTS.

THERE is one kind of play in which the Eskimo boys seem always ready to indulge—a roll downhill. They select a small but steep hill, or incline, well-covered with snow, and, seating themselves on the top of the ridge, thrust their heads between their legs, pass their clinched, gloved hands over their ankles, pressing their legs as closely against their bodies as possible. They thus really make themselves into big balls

ESKIMO BOYS ROLLING DOWN A HILL. 117

covered with reindeer hair, and then away they go on a rolling race downhill, suddenly spreading themselves out at full length, and stopping instantly at the bottom of the hill. Every now and then when a playful mood strikes a boy, he



OH! SUCH FUN.

will double himself up and roll downhill without waiting for the rivalry of a race, but it is violent exercise, and it bumps the little urchin severely.

Another athletic amusement in which the boys indulge, and which requires a great deal of strength, is a peculiar kind of short race on the hands and feet. The boys lean forward on their hands and feet, with their arms and legs held as stiffly as possible, and under no circumstances must they bend either the elbows or knees. In this stiff and rigid position, resting only on their feet and on the knuckles of their clinched fists, they jump or hitch forward a couple of inches by a quick, convulsive movement of the whole body. These movements are rapidly repeated, perhaps once or twice in a second, until the contestants have covered two or three yards along the hard snow-drifts. Then they become exhausted, for, as I have already said, this exercise calls for considerable

A RACE ON HANDS AND FEET

strength, and is indeed a very fatiguing amusement; so that, by the time a boy has played quite energetically in this way, if only for a minute, he feels very tired, and is willing to take a breathing spell. It is not a very graceful game, and if you were to take a carpenter's wooden horse and jog it along by short jerks over the floor, you would have a tolerably fair representation of this awkward game of the Eskimo children. The best part of it all is the exercise it gives them, and often one will see a single boy jumping along in this stiff-legged fashion as if he were practicing for a race, a slight downhill grade being preferred.

Another method of racing, somewhat similar to the above, is also practiced; folding the arms across the breast, and

holding the knees firmly rigid, with the feet close together, the contestants paddle along as fast as possible by short jumps of an inch or two. It is a severe strain on the feet, and one cannot go very far in so awkward a way. The little girls, standing in a row of from three to five, often jump up and down in the same manner, keeping a sort of time with the thumping of their heels to the rude songs that they are spluttering out in short jerks and gasps, as unmusical as the hammering of their heels. A lot of these little damsels would favor us with a short version of this stiff-jumping, spluttering melody whenever they were particularly grateful for some small gift we had presented to them.

A capital game played by the little girls, and by some of the smaller boys, is

ESKIMO BOYS PLAYING "SAND-BAG" BALL.

a rude sort of ball-game. Thick seal-skin leather is made into a ball about the size of our common base-ball, and then filled about two-thirds full with sand. If completely filled, it would be as hard and unyielding as a stone, and the singular *sliding* way it has of yielding because of its being only partially filled, makes it much harder to catch and retain in the hands than our common ball. The game is a very simple one, much like our play with bean-bags, and consists simply in striking at the ball with the open palm of the hand, and, when there is a crowd of players, in keeping the ball constantly in the air. This is a favorite summer game when the snow is off the ground and the people are living in seal-skin tents. No doubt it affords considerable exercise. Whenever the ball drops to

the ground, or the players fail to keep it flying, it is a signal for a rest. Simple as is the game, the little Eskimo manage to gain much fun and excitement from it, and whenever you hear an unusual amount of shouting and loud and boisterous merriment out-of-doors, you may be almost certain of finding, when you go to your tent door, that all the children of the village are engaged in a game of "sand-bag ball."

A favorite Eskimo amusement is one which both the white and Indian boys sometimes play with the bow and arrow. It is to see how many arrows can be kept in the air at one time. The Eskimo boy, with his quiver pulled around over his shoulders so that he can get the arrows quickly and readily, commences shooting them straight up into the air,

and when the first arrow thus shot up strikes the ground, he must at once stop. The number of arrows he has shot indicates his score, which he will compare with that made by the other boys. Sometimes they will only count those that in descending stand upright in the snow, and in this case they will shoot all that are in their quivers.

At another time they will count only those that stick upright within a certain area, generally a circle of from twenty to thirty yards in diameter; these must all be shot from the bow by the time the first arrow strikes within the space marked out, and in this case considerable precision and rapidity in shooting are required to make a good score. The boys will often shoot a single arrow high into the air and try to intercept it with

another one sent straight horizontally above the ground as the first one rapidly descends. The Eskimo and Indians and other savage tribes who are skilled in the use of the bow and arrow, can shoot an arrow so that it will go somewhat *sidewise*. They practice this way of shooting when trying to hit a descending arrow, or one stuck upright in the ground. It must, however, be remembered that the Eskimo are not as good bowmen as are many of the other savage tribes, who gain a part or all of their living by this instrument; the Eskimo use spears and lances much more frequently, and where accuracy is especially needed, bows are seldom employed. With those Eskimo who come into frequent contact with white men, guns have now altogether taken the place of bows and arrows.

Another Eskimo out-of-door amusement much resembles the old Indian game of "Lacrosse." It is played on the smooth lake ice, with three or four small round balls of quartz or granite, about the size of an English walnut. These are kicked and knocked about the lake, with plenty of fun and shouting, but utterly without any rules to govern the game.

It takes a long time to grind one of these irregular pieces of stone into a round ball, but the Eskimo people are very patient and untiring in their routine work, and with them, as with the Indians, time is of hardly any consequence whatever. The number of years that they will spend in plodding away at the most simple things shows them to be probably the most patient people in the world.

CHAPTER IX.

ESKIMO PATIENCE.

WHEN we were near King William s Land, I saw an Eskimo working upon a knife that, as nearly as I could ascertain, had engaged a good part of his time some six years preceding that date. He had a flat piece of iron, which had been taken from the wreck of one of Sir John Franklin's ships, and from this he was endeavoring to make a knife-blade, which, when completed, would be about twelve inches long. In cutting it from this iron

plate he was using for a chisel an old file, found on one of the ships, which it had taken him two or three years to sharpen by rubbing its edge against stones and rocks. His cold-chisel finished, he had been nearly as many years cutting a straight edge along the ragged sides of the irregular piece of iron, and when I discovered him he had outlined the width of his knife on the plate and was cutting away at it. It would probably have taken him two years to cut out this piece, and two more to fashion the knife into shape and usefulness.

The file which he had made into a cold-chisel was such a proof of labor and patience that it was a great curiosity to me, and I gave him a butcher's knife in exchange for it. Thus almost the very thing he had been so long trying to

make he now unexpectedly found in his possession. When I told him that our factories (or "big *igloos*," as I called them for his easier understanding) could make more than he could carry of such butcher-knives during the time we had spent in talking about his, he expressed his great surprise in prolonged gasps of breath at this manifest superiority of the *Kod-loou-sah*, as the Eskimo call the white men.

Among the women of this same tribe I found a number of square iron needles that they had taken months to make, slowly filing them on rough, rusty iron plates and occasionally using stones for the same purpose. We had with us a great number of glover's needles, and these we traded for the iron ones, which to us were great curiosities. The women

do some wonderfully neat sewing with these needles, considering the nature of the implements and the coarse thread of reindeer sinew which they use. This sinew is stripped from the reindeer's back in flat pieces about eighteen inches long and two inches wide. The Eskimo woman's spool of thread consists of a bundle of these strips of sinew, hung up in the *igloo*, from which she strips a thread whenever she needs one. It is very strong, and will cut through the flesh of one's fingers before it can be broken. The Eskimo braid it into fish-lines, bow-strings, whip-cord, and nearly always have a ball of it on hand in the house braided up and ready for use.

Before the Eskimo became acquainted with white men, and learned to use their better implements, many household arti-

cles were made from bone and the ivory walrus tusks. Among these were forks, spoons, and even knives, of which a few designs are shown on the next page. Very few are in existence now, but some of them were much more ornamental than those in the illustration, for, as I have said, the northern natives do not hesitate to begin any thing for want of time in which to complete it; and if they only have the ingenuity to manufacture odd or pretty designs, they have plenty of leisure and plenty of patience to carve them out.

Many of the smaller and odd pieces left from the tusk are carved into figures of birds and animals. Occasionally you will see some old woman of the tribe with quite a bagful of ivory dogs, ducks, bears, swans, walrus, seals, and every

ESKIMO KNIVES, FORKS AND SPOONS CARVED OUT OF IVORY.

living thing with the form of which they are familiar. They will make rude dominoes and sit and play with them for hours at a time during their long winter evenings. And not toys only, but many articles of utility also are thus carved from the ivory taken from the tusks of the walrus. Walrus and seal spear-heads, and the sharpened head of the lances they used in killling the musk-ox and polar bear, were formerly thus made. In fact, it would have been almost impossible for the Eskimo to exist without this valuable portion of the walrus, before an acquaintance with the white men enabled them to secure iron and guns to replace their own rude implements. The principal use now made of the tusks is to trade them in quantities to the whalers, who pay for them

in such merchandise as the natives need.

The Eskimo have no money of any sort, and know nothing of its use. In fact, they know very little about the true value of any one thing as compared with others; and if they desire a needle, or any other small article, they are ready to give in exchange for it a garment or object which you, brought up to compare the value of things, would know to be worth ten, or possibly one hundred, times as much. The poor creatures are thus often badly cheated by unprincipled persons who take advantage of this trait of their character, and they frequently receive little or nothing for things which in our own country are very valuable. I once saw such a man give twenty-five musket-caps to an Eskimo boy for five

pretty, white fox skins, which, at that rate, would have been one cent of our money for three fox skins; and the skins could readily be sold for five dollars when he reached the United States.

CHAPTER X.

LITTLE BOREAS'S WORK.

IN common with the children of workers all over the world, little Boreas must commence to take his share in the family toil as soon as he is old enough to learn and strong enough to do. Most of the sports of the boys are, in fact, such as will enable them to learn something that will be useful later in life, such as playing with the young dogs, harnessing and driving them, shooting with the bow and arrow, and throwing the lance

at live animals. The girls, also, in making their dolls, learn to sew and to make coats and other garments of reindeer skin, and boots and shoes of sealskin leather.

When the men have very nearly finished building the *igloo*, the boys are expected to take the big, broad wooden shovel, described in Chapter II., and throw the loose snow against the sides of the *igloo*; for between the blocks of snow will be many "chinks" and crevices that would let in a great deal of cold air if not stopped up. Besides throwing on this loose, soft snow about two feet deep, the boys have still another way of "chinking." Little Boreas, with the snow-knife in his right hand, cuts from the upper edge of the block, in the joint which is to be "chinked," a thin slice of snow,

and with his left fist doubled up rams it into the joint between the blocks, his left fist keeping a constant punching as the knife runs slowly along the edge of the joint.

Of course, during the first three or four courses of blocks, the boys (and sometimes the girls) can "chink" the joints while they are standing or kneeling on the ground; but after it gets above and beyond the reach of their arms, they have to crawl on top of the house, which looks so frail that you are almost certain the little fellows will tumble through the thin snow walls of the hut. But when it is completed and made of good snow, three or four big men can go on top of it, so much stronger is it than it appears to be. Sometimes, however, the boys are sur-

prised and disappointed; for, when the snow is soft, or happens to be full of sand or little specks of ice, they come tumbling through the top of the *igloo*, generally on the heads of those who are making the bed or setting the lamp inside of the house; and then the *igloo* has to be built all over again. Fortunately, however, these cases are of rare occurrence.

Sometimes, in very cold weather, the boys will both "chink" and "bank" the *igloo* (banking being the covering with loose snow), and then, with a small lamp, it is quite easy to heat up the little snow house to a comfortable temperature; but this, you remember, must never rise to the point where snow melts, or the house will come tumbling in on their heads. After Boreas's father has cut

enough snow blocks to go two or three times around the *igloo*, if there is no other man in the party, he will tell Boreas to cut the rest; and the lad generally manages to furnish his father with enough blocks to complete the house.

After the *igloo* is finished, the bedding of reindeer skins is taken from the sledge; but before these go in-doors, the snow that has worked into them (especially if there has been a strong wind during the day) must be beaten off with a snow-stick; and this comparatively light work generally falls to the children, unless there is a great hurry to get into shelter from some terrible wind, in which case all the party turn to and work with a will.

When the house is finished, Boreas must see that the dogs are unharnessed and turned loose. The seal-skin harness,

which the dogs would eat if in their usual hungry condition, must be put inside the snow house or fastened to the top of a tall pole, stuck upright in the snow, so that the dogs can not reach it.

In the morning, when the dogs are needed for the day's work, the boys have to scamper around with two or three harnesses in their hands, catch and harness the dogs, hitch them to the sledge, and then start out after another lot. It frequently happens that some particular dog takes an especial delight in giving his catchers just as much trouble as he possibly can. As soon as he sees that the other dogs are being harnessed, he will trot away to the top of some high ridge, and coolly sitting down, will maliciously watch the efforts made to catch him. Of course, every body now turns out,

the dog is surrounded, and probably after he has broken through the circle thus formed around him two or three times, he is finally caught and receives a severe trouncing from a harness-trace in the hands of some angry young Eskimo; but this lesson seldom does the dogs much good, as I have always noticed that, like spoiled children, they invariably go from bad to worse, until finally their master becomes so angry that he ties one of the dog's forefeet to its body every night, so that he will have no trouble in catching the would-be runaway on the next morning.

The dogs are also used in various ways in hunting. When the weather is so foggy that Boreas's father can not see very far, and there is consequently but little prospect of killing any thing, unless

ESKIMO BOYS CATCHING A RUNAWAY DOG.

the hunter almost stumbles upon it, the father will take his bow and arrows, or his gun, if he be fortunate enough to own one, and giving the best-trained hunting-dog in charge of Boreas himself, they start out reindeer hunting. Boreas puts a harness on the dog, ties the trace around his own waist, or holds it in his hands, and follows his father out into the fog.

Of course, the older Eskimo has some idea of where the reindeer will be grazing or resting, and he soon finds out which way the wind is blowing over the place where he suspects the reindeer to be. Then, with Boreas and the dog, he goes *around* in such a way that the game will not be disturbed, to some place where the wind, blowing over the reindeer, will come toward the hunters. As soon as

this place is reached, the dog smells the reindeer, and commences sniffing the air as if anxious to get toward them. Boreas allows the dog to advance slowly, still holding on to the harness so that the dog shall not run away. As soon as it scents the deer, it goes directly toward them, and when it is quite near, it grows excited, and commences to jump and to jerk the harness-trace by which Boreas is holding it; being a well-trained hunting-dog, however, it never barks so as to frighten the deer by the sound.

Boreas's father now knows from these excited actions of the dog that the reindeer must be close at hand, although he can not see them for the fog. So he tells Boreas to hold the dog and remain in that spot, while he takes his bow or gun and crawls cautiously forward in the

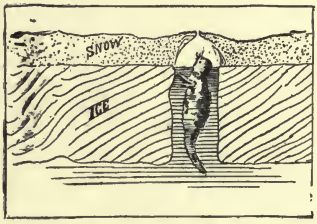
proper direction. Before he has gone far, probably not more than twenty or twenty-five yards away, the huge forms of two or three reindeer loom up through the fog. If he is a good hunter he will at least bring one down, and perhaps two or three of them, and so have something for supper. When there is snow on the ground, the boy will generally take two or three dogs along, and after a reindeer is killed, will use them to drag it into the snow house. As Boreas loves excitement, this is good sport, and in this way he soon learns to hunt quite well.

CHAPTER XI.

SEAL HUNTING.

THE ice on the ocean forms from six to ten feet thick, and through this deep ice the seals manage to scratch a hole to the top, and then form a little *igloo* in the foot or two of snow that usually covers the ice. In the top of this little snow dome is an opening as large as your two fingers; and to this *igloo* the seal comes, about every quarter of an hour, to breathe. When he puts his nose close to the little hole at the top

of the dome for some fresh air, he breathes in a series of short gasps that any one near the hole can readily hear. These holes are so small that even the close-observing Eskimo hunters, while walking over miles of ice-fields, could easily pass them by without observing them. But if there is a dog along, as in reindeer-hunting, and if the wind is in the right direction, and a seal has been breathing recently in the *igloo*, the dog will scent a seal-hole a hundred yards away, and will lead the hunter to it. As it is very uncertain just how long he will have to wait for the seals, the hunter proceeds at once to cut out two or three



THE SEAL'S IGLOO.

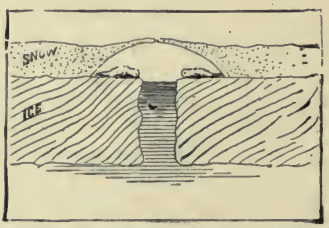
blocks of snow to make a comfortable seat on which to rest and wait. As I have already said, the seal breathes, or "blows," as it is called, every fifteen or twenty minutes; but oftentimes he is traveling, and each time comes up to a different hole to blow. It is possible, too, that he may hear or smell the hunter or his dog—for seals are very timid animals—in fact, there are many reasons why the hole may not be visited by a seal for a long time, and after watching for a whole day, the hunter may have to leave the place unrewarded. Where

READY FOR THE SEAL TO BLOW.

the natives, as is often the case, have been almost starving, owing to the scarcity of seals and other game on which they live, the best and most patient seal-hunters have been known to sit *for two or three days at one hole* watching vigilantly for a seal's nose. But, however long it may be before "pussy" (as the seals are sometimes called) comes around to breathe a little whiff of fresh air, as soon as the first "blow" is heard by the hunter, who is, perhaps, half asleep, he is at once full of expectation and excitement. He places the point of his seal-spear close to the "blow-hole," and by the time "pussy" has taken two or three whiffs she is astonished by a sudden thrust of the spear crushing through the dome of snow; the cruel barb on the spear-point catches into her flesh under-

neath the skin, and the hunter draws her to the top of the ice, crushes in the snow with his heavy heel, and then kills the captured seal.

Sometimes the mother seal seeks a breathing-hole under the deepest snow and makes a much larger dome, so that the ice will form a shelf two or three feet in width. Here the little "kittens," or baby seals, spend their time until they are big enough to try to swim with their mother and learn to care for themselves. Here, too, she brings them food, and when disturbed, hurries away, leaving her kittens on their ice shelf, where they are safe from harm, be-



THE LEDGES FOR THE SEAL BABIES.

cause they are of the same color as the snow and, therefore, can not be seen by the wolf or bear who is out seal-hunting. The Eskimo, however, when he comes to one of these *igloos*, has an instrument like a long knitting-needle, which he sticks in through the blow-hole, and, working it around, soon finds out whether any babies are to be kidnapped from Mother Seal's snow house

CHAPTER XII.

FISHING.

AFTER little Boreas's father has gone into camp, and while he is building his snow house, the boys of the party go to work, dig a hole through the ice on the fresh-water lake, near where the camp is built, in order to get fresh water, with which to cook supper. The first thing necessary is to select a good spot for the well, which is generally about a foot and a half or two feet in diameter, and from four to eight and ten feet deep, depending, of course, upon the thickness of the ice.

But, before they begin to dig, the boys fling themselves down on the ice, even flattening their noses hard against it, so as to bring their eyes as close to it as possible. From some peculiarity in the color and appearance of the ice they can judge as to there being water underneath it, for there is nothing more disappointing, after having dug the well five or six feet down, to find lumps of it coming up full of mud or sand, showing that the bottom is dry. The boys, however, seldom make a mistake in their observations, although now and then they will get "fooled" about it, and will find that they have spent a quarter of an hour's hard work for nothing.

The deeper the snow has drifted on the ice the thinner the ice will be, as the snow protects it during the intense cold,

just as in our climate the deep snow protects the delicate plants on the ground, and keeps them from being killed by the coldest weather. And as it is so much easier to shovel off the soft snow than to dig through the hard ice, the boys always look for a deep snow-drift very near to the spot where they have peered through the ice and seen clear water beneath. If they can get near a crack that extends entirely through the ice, it will also make it much easier to dig the well, as one side is thus already prepared for them.

Having selected as favorable a place as possible, they commence their digging. The first instrument used is nothing more than a chisel, a bayonet, or a sharpened piece of iron, lashed on the end of a pole ten or twelve feet long.

WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF THE SEAL

With this they cut a circular hole in the ice of about two feet in diameter, and a foot deep. Then, when it becomes difficult to use the ice-chisel, they scoop out the accumulated pulverized ice with thin ladles made from musk-ox horn, of which I told you in a former chapter. One of these ladles is also lashed to a long pole, and is used to dip the cut ice out of the well. And so the boys work away at their well, first cutting down a foot or so with their ice-chisels, and then scooping it out with their ladles, then cutting again, then scooping, until finally they have bored clear through, and the fresh water comes rushing up to the top, and all the thirsty people in camp, who have had no water all day—as well as the dogs, which are equally thirsty—get a good drink, and have plenty

of water with which to prepare supper.

If the boys had not been successful in finding water, the girls would be obliged to collect a lot of ice or snow and melt it in stone kettles over the *igloo* lamps, and at least an hour would be wasted before their hot supper would be ready—and that is quite a serious affair, as in that terribly cold country people want their supper just as soon as it can be made. Besides this, a great deal of oil would have to be used in melting the ice and snow, and oil is very precious.

In digging the ice-well the boys are careful to keep the hole the same diameter away down to the water, especially when they come near the bottom, for if there are any fish in the lake or river they will try to catch them through this

hole in the ice. Most of the lakes and rivers of the Arctic regions of North America are full of delicious salmon, and the poor Eskimo who have to eat so much fishy seal meat and strong-tasting walrus flesh, appreciate these fine salmon much more than do we, with our great variety of food. Their fish-lines are made of reindeer sinew, and are much stronger than are our lines. The fish-hooks are simply bent pieces of sharpened iron or copper, and as they are not barbed at the end, the native fisherman has to pull in very fast when he hooks his fish, or he will lose it, as every boy knows who has fished with a pin-hook.

If a lake is well stocked with fish, the natives will often camp by it for two or three days and dig a number of holes, so that the women, and every boy and girl

as well, can be busy catching salmon while the hunters are roaming over the hills looking for reindeer and musk-oxen. Here they will sit, on a couple of snow-blocks, nearly all day long, holding the hook a couple of feet below the ice, and bobbing it continually to attract the notice of the fish. Sometimes they attach small, polished ivory balls near the hook, to attract the fish, which seeing them, from a long distance, dancing up and down and glistening in the light, at once swim up and try to eat the reindeer bait on the bent hook, to their certain and speedy disgust. As a protection from the wind, the young fishers often build a sort of half *igloo*, and shelter themselves behind it. This also serves as a place to hide the fish that are caught; for there are always a crowd of half-starved dogs

ESKIMO BOYS SPEARING FISH IN THE RIVER RAPIDS

sneaking about, trying by hook or crook to steal a fish.

But this is not the only way that the Eskimo boys and girls have of catching fish. In the spring of their year, about the middle of our summer time, when the ice is breaking up and running out of their rivers, they catch fish in great quantities at the rapids in the rivers, and store them away for use in the winter. For this purpose they use a curious spiked and barbed fish-spear, which is shown in the illustration on page 167.

When the fish are very numerous, the men and women, as well as the boys and girls, manage to get a footing on some rock in the rapids, where they can stand easily, and, as the fish rush by, they impale them on these spears until great

quantities have been caught. The fish are then split open, and spread over double rows of strings stretched from rock to rock. Here they are left to dry, though in the cold, short Arctic summer the fish only become about half as well dried as they would in our climate. These dried fish are then stored in seal-skin bags and kept for future use; a great many are fed to the dogs to put them in good condition for the winter.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THEIR CLOTHES ARE MADE.

WHEN the reindeer have been killed, their skins are stretched on the ground to dry, with the hairy side down, and although they may freeze as stiff as a board, in the course of a week or two the water will dry out of them. These skins are then taken and put through a process by means of which they are made as nice and soft as a piece of buckskin or chamois-skin—or, if it be a fawn reindeer, as soft as piece of kid. This is

done by scraping them with a peculiarly shaped instrument which tears off all the flesh that may have adhered, and scrapes away the inner thick skin that makes the hide so stiff and unpliable. When the skins are thick and heavy, the men do the work, for it is then very difficult; but otherwise the women, and very often the little girls, scrape the skins and give the finishing touches, and then make them up into coats, dresses, stockings, slippers, and all sorts of clothing.

For cutting these reindeer skins into shapes for garments, a very queer kind of scissors is used. It is, in fact, a kind of knife, and an odd knife at that. It looks very much like the knife that is used by saddlers and harness-makers; and when it is used in cutting, it is always shoved away from the person using it.

This knife is used for every thing that is to be done in the way of cutting, from seal and reindeer skin to the thinnest and most fragile strings. At meals, too, some one will put to his mouth a great piece of blubber or fish as big as your fist, seize as much as he can with his teeth, grasp the rest in his hand, and cut off a huge mouthful with this knife. If you were watching him, you would feel certain that he would slice off his nose in this awkward movement, but the Eskimo are so very dextrous that there is not the slightest danger of such an accident.

When the reindeer skins have been dressed, and made up into garments, and these have been put on—girls and boys, men and women, are dressed so nearly alike that at any considerable distance you can not tell them apart.

The Eskimo girl wears a long apron. And just over her shoulders her coat-sleeves swell out into large pockets; and in her stockings, just above the outer part of the ankles, she also has pockets, in which she keeps her sewing, moss for lamp-wicking, a roll of sinew for thread, and any other similar article that she may need to carry with her.

ESKIMO BOAT (BIDARKAH)

CHAPTER XIV.

FOUR ESKIMO CHILDREN.

THE four Eskimo children with whom I became best acquainted during my Arctic trip were in my sledge-party in a journey from North Hudson's Bay to King William's Land and back again, which occupied nearly a year. Their names were Ah-wan-ak, Koo-man-ah, I-yawk-a-wak, and Kood-le-uk.

Ahwanak was a boy of about fourteen or fifteen, Koomanah a boy of from twelve to thirteen, Iyawkawak was my

driver's little two-year-old baby boy, and Koodleuk was a bright little three-year-old girl. Ahwanak and Koomanah, of course, were good-sized boys, and able to do considerable work for us, on even so hard a trip as was ours. These boys walked nearly the entire distance, but the babies Iyawkawak and Koodleuk, when they were not in their mothers' hoods, always rode on the sledges that their fathers managed. Their place upon the sledges was near the front of the loads, close to their fathers, who, as dog-drivers, managed their sledges from this place, and could thus easily watch their little children, and see that they did not tumble off when riding over rough or steep places.

In lashing on the loads, a nice sort of a place would be fixed, where the two

THE BABY'S PLACE UPON THE SLEDGE

babies could cuddle in and rest as comfortably as if they were in a baby-carriage. Here they would ride nearly the whole day, excepting at such time as their mothers would take them into their hoods; and despite the bumpings of the sledge or the raw cold weather, they would be pleasant and jolly enough to make a civilized baby ashamed of itself. Sometimes, however, the babies would cry with the cold, and have to be put in their mothers' warm hoods to keep them from freezing; but the amount of cold they would stand without complaining was really remarkable. And, notwithstanding the bitter exposure they undergo, such a thing as a "cold" is almost unknown among Eskimo children.

Every hour or two, according as the

pulling was hard or the load heavy, the sledge would stop for ten or fifteen minutes to give the dogs and every one else a good rest. The two babies would then be taken from the sledge, and allowed to run about and exercise until the sledge would start again.

However much they might tumble over the hard snow, there was but little danger of their hurting themselves, so heavily were they clothed in their dresses of reindeer skin, looking for all the world, like great big balls of fur running about. After the party had gone into camp, the little babies played about among the sleeping dogs or whatever attracted their attention, until the reindeer bedding was arranged inside the *igloo*, when the little people were undressed and put to bed.

After the lamp has been burning until

the small snow house is about as warm as is advisable, the babies crawl out and play about on the bed. Iyawkawak and Koodleuk had such unpronounceable names that they were hard to remember; and so the men of our party called the boy "Jack," and the girl "Rosy," on account of her rosy red cheeks. Most of the Eskimo children have red cheeks, despite the dark hue of their faces, and though they are rarely free from dirt. Yet, the children's faces are generally neater than those of the "grown-up" people, many of whom look really horrible, as they never wash their faces.

The wives of Toolooah and Ikquiesek both were very particular with their children, and little "Jack" and "Rosy" were as neat Eskimo children as you could possibly find.

The two boys, Ahwanak and Koomanah, had a great deal of work to do about the camp, much of which has already been described in former chapters. They had been through some curious adventures even before I met them.

At one time, when he was about ten years old, Koomanah was walking, with his little sister and brother, on the salt-water ice that forms for two or three miles wide along the shores of Hudson's Bay, when they were greatly terrified to find that the great field of ice on which they were walking had separated from the firm shore-ice, and was drifting out to sea. A great lane of water which lay between them and their homes was every minute growing wider; and worse than all, a storm was coming up, which would make it still harder to escape.

Before long, their situation became known, and many a brave man started out in the rough waters in his little frail seal-skin canoe, or *kiak*, to do his best to rescue the children. In a little while, Koomanah saw their rescuers; but the storm had made the waves so heavy that the edges of the ice-field were broken into a thousand floating cakes, many of them as big as small houses, which turned and tumbled over one another in a way to appall even the stoutest heart. But brave young Koomanah was equal to the emergency, and, fearful as it seemed, he knew he must cross that wide space of rolling, heaving, tumbling blocks of ice before he could reach the skin canoes of the rescuers, who, of course, picked out the best place possible to accomplish their daring attempts.

At last, Koomanah found a suitable place, and taking advantage of an apparent lull in the storm, without hesitation he started across the pack with his brother's and sister's hands in his; and knowing that their lives depended on his judgment, he carefully picked his way from block to block. A dozen times, either he or the children slipped on the dancing ice, and once a great block near them rolled completely over, deluging them with water and blinding Koomanah with the spray. Recovering himself, he still splashed and struggled on like a little hero. At last one block, on which they stopped a moment, tilted on its side, and threw them in a heap. Here one of the little children was crushed between two great grinding cakes of ice, and sunk out of sight in

A KIAK (NATIVE BOAT)

the tossing, foaming water. Koomanah grasped the other child in his arms, and, staggering and plunging over the ice, the tossing and turning of which grew worse as he neared its outer edge, he managed to throw the baby he had saved close to a *kiak*, and then threw himself after it. Both were picked up and were soon safe in their home, which, though made desolate by the loss of one little one, had still two left, one of whom would be acknowledged as a little hero the world over.

Ahwanak's adventure was even more exciting, though he had no little children in his charge.

He had gone with his big brother Iquiesek and with Nannook, a splendid hunter of the village, on a walrus hunt. The three were caught on an ice-floe, or

solid field of ice, which suddenly separated, and the piece on which they stood was blown straight out to sea. It sailed on until, in the drifting storm, nothing was seen but the waters of the bay that surrounded them, and all hope of seeing land until the gale subsided was given up.

Besides the two men and Ahwanak, there were a sledge and four or five dogs on the ice-raft. Taking things rather coolly, after they had recovered from their surprise and disappointment, they went to work and built a good strong *igloo* to protect them from the storm. Presently a walrus crawled up to ride on their ship of ice; they killed it, and, dragging its carcass up to their snow house, made a lamp out of the thick hide, prepared some lamp-wicking from pieces of cloth, cut a quantity of blubber

from the walrus, and in a little while had their *igloo* about as warm as one regularly constructed on the land, and had, at the same time, plenty of meat for themselves and their few dogs. If they had only been provided with bedding, they could have safely remained on the island of ice all winter, so far as any fear of starvation was concerned. As it was, they drew their arms out of their coat sleeves, and went to sleep in their clothes, as do all Eskimo when without bedding.

For two days the storm raged. They seldom ventured out, and could not tell which way they were drifting. On the third day, however, the storm cleared up, the long sledge was placed against the snow house, and from its topmost slat Ahwanak scanned the horizon for some sign of land, or something by which they

might tell where they were. In the course of the day the prisoners on the ice-raft sighted on the horizon the bold headland of Poillon Point, and by night-time the tide and current had set them in so close to the land that they were able to reach the firm ice along-shore, where they soon hitched up their dogs and rode home as fast as they could over twenty miles that intervened—greatly astonishing and delighting their anxious friends. These driftings out to sea on great cakes of ice, however, are rather common adventures, and nearly every hunter has had one or two such experiences in his life-time.

But to return to Ahwanak and Koomanah. When we left our morning's camp for our day's journey, the two boys would walk along, with but little to do;

AHWANAK SCANNED THE HORIZON FOR SOME SIGN OF LAND

but if reindeer were seen grazing on the distant hills, Ahwanak and Koomanah would take charge of two of the sledges, while the men seized their guns and tried to kill some of the deer. If the reindeer were directly in our path, the dogs and sledges halted, and the two boys had only to stand guard; but if they were off our track, then the sledges kept on their way, some man taking the foremost sledge, and the boys easily driving the dogs, which very willingly follow a sledge-track in front of them. In case the party halted, the boys would watch the hunters from the top of a loaded sledge, and if they saw one come to the top of a ridge or on a hill, and with one arm extended, swing his body from a perpendicular nearly to the ground, they knew a reindeer had been killed, and that

two or three dogs were needed to drag off the body. Then they would unhitch these from the team, and take them over to the hunter, who would fasten their traces around the reindeer's horns, and drag it to the sledge. Occasionally the two boys would try a reindeer hunt on their own hook, and although they were seldom successful, not daring to frighten the deer from the men who were better hunters, yet once in awhile they were rewarded, and then their eyes would fairly glisten with joy and pride.

Colonel Gilder, of our party, was very kind to little Koomanah, and becoming tired of carrying his revolver, he took off the ordinary wooden pistol-butt and put in a longer one, more like a gun-stock, and roughly made of walnut. He let Koomanah use this dwarf gun, as

the boy could easily fire it from his shoulder. This, of course, increased its accuracy of aim, as it could be held much steadier. It held six cartridges, and could, therefore, be fired six times without reloading. As so wonderful a gun in so young a person's possession was never before known among these simple people, Koomanah was greatly elevated in their estimation, and felt very proud and elated over his fine weapon.

As I have said, the two boys seldom interfered with the hunting of the men, and when they took their guns (for Ahwanak had a musket that he greatly prized) and went away from the sledges, it was nearly always to get far to the right or left and hide behind some ridge. Here they would wait to see if the reindeer ran in that direction after the men

had fired at them, in which case they might get a running shot as they passed. The farther north we penetrated, the more stupid were the reindeer; and having never before heard a shot fired, they would run about in a frightened and aimless way, thus giving the boys a much better chance at them.

One day, while going through a narrow valley between steep hills, reindeer were reported ahead. The sledges were stopped, and the hunters with their guns went on to try to kill some; Koomanah and Ahwanak following slowly behind with their guns to see if they could possibly get a shot. Seeing a small break or pass in the steep hills to their left, the boys entered it to go into the next valley, hoping the deer might cross their path. They were nearly through, when

they heard shots, and, keeping a short distance apart, they concealed themselves as well as they could by lying behind some stones, and awaited results.

The reindeer, frightened by the rapid shooting, broke in a circle around the hunters, and were rushing down the valley, when they saw the dogs and sledges. Quick as a flash, they turned up the pass the boys had entered. When the deer came trotting along, and were within about a hundred yards of Koomanah, they turned suddenly around and stopped, and, with eyes dilating and ears pricked up, they looked backward through the pass, watching for danger, but never dreaming of that directly ahead of them in the shape of two small boys.

This stoppage gave Koomanah a

splendid shot, but a long one; and with his heart in his mouth for fear of missing, he took a broadside aim at a big buck, over the stone behind which he was hidden. "Bang!" went Koomanah's pistol-gun, and away went the deer like arrows. But they had not gone a score of yards before the big buck commenced to stumble, and in a little while rolled over on its side and commenced kicking in the air. Koomanah's shot had been much better than he thought when he saw them all start away together. Of course Koomanah had a right to be proud now over this big reindeer, that would have taken a half a dozen boys of his size to pack into camp, and he was highly praised for his sportsmanship.

During the whole trip Koomanah

"KOOMANAH TOOK A BROADSIDE AIM AT A BIG BUCK."

killed ten reindeer and Ahwanak six. There were two shot-guns with the party, and as none of the hunters seemed to monopolize the smaller game as they did the reindeer and seal, the two boys had great sport with the small game, and we were constantly regaled with the ducks, geese and ptarmigan that they brought in.

One of the special duties of the boys was to look after duck-eggs when in season. At this they were very successful, for during the summer the eider-ducks swarm in countless numbers to the island of King William's Land, where they hatch and rear their young disturbed by but few of their enemies—the wolves, wolverines, and foxes. Many a nice dish of eggs did we have through the vigilance and energy of Koomanah

and Ahwanak. As we were then living on nothing but seal and reindeer meat, these eggs were considered a great luxury. After the small ducks had grown large enough to be eatable, the two boys killed a great number—Ahwanak securing over fifty in one day. The Eskimo boys are excellent stone-throwers. It is no uncommon thing for them to kill a ptarmigan or a duck in this manner, as well as the little ground-squirrel (or marmot), common in that country, and bring it in to be eaten. As is the case with most savages, the Eskimo children have few pets, as they have no way to take care of them.

Thus far, all that I have said has, I am glad to say, been wholly in favor of our two boys; but they had one bad habit for folk so young, although it is a habit

which is common among the young Eskimo. This is smoking. As soon as they can learn to draw a pipe, they begin; and both men and women smoke, although the boys and women generally smoke a weed that grows in the Arctic country, and is not nearly so strong nor disagreeable as tobacco.

After Koomanah and Ahwanak returned to the northern part of Hudson's Bay at the close of our year's sledge-trip, they were given the guns they had so well earned, and ammunition for them also.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW WE PASSED THE WINTER.

WE have spoken of all the games and sports, the troubles and labors of the little ones of far-away Eskimo land, and even chronicled some of the doings of the small boys who had had interesting adventures of their own, and now, I suppose, you might like to hear how we white men lived in the Arctic regions, when with all these Eskimo people and their children, and, especially, how we passed the winter with them.

I have already told you how they built their curious little houses of snow for winter dwellings, and how much they looked like the half of a huge egg-shell resting on the side of a hill covered with snow. Now, in order to make these houses of snow—*igloos*, as the makers call them—the snow must be of a certain hardness and texture, so that the blocks —or huge snow-bricks, if you would so call them—will hold together when handling them, and after they are in the walls of the white building. It must have been quite cold so as to freeze the snow into a sort of homogeneous mass, and it must have been packed down by the wind a good deal to make it compact and solid. The first snow of the coming winter does not make good strong snow-blocks for the *igloos*, however deep it

may fall, and from the time there is enough of it, the Eskimo often have to wait three or four weeks before it is fit for building. As it gets too cold in their summer seal-skin tents before this time comes, the natives generally build preliminary houses of ice, which, singular as it may seem, are much warmer than the tents, but not as comfortable as the houses of snow. When the ice has formed to about six inches in thickness on some lake close by, they cut out their big slabs of ice for the sides of the house. Imagine an ordinary-sized house-door to be a slab of ice about six inches thick; then take a half-dozen to a dozen of these doors, and place them in a circle, joining them edge to edge, but leaning in slightly, and you will have formed your curious house of ice. Over this

circular pen of ice — which you can imitate on a small scale with a circular row of upright dominoes on their ends and joined edge to edge—the summer seal-skin tent is lashed across poles for a roof, and the ice-house is complete. By and by, this roof, sagging with snow, may be taken off and a dome of snow put on, which gives more height and consequently more comfort.

Bancroft Library

In our first winter camp in North Hudson's Bay, the houses were made of these ice-slabs in the manner just described, and surmounted by a dome of snow. They were supplied with little circular windows, also made of thin sheets of ice, which let in the light quite as well as our own at home, although not nearly so much light, because they are very much smaller than our windows.

Before these houses get covered inside with the black soot from the burning lamps, and before the snow outside has drifted up level with the roof, a night scene in a village of ice, and especially if the village be a large one and all the lamps be burning brilliantly, is one of the prettiest views a stranger can find in that desolate land. If you could behold a village of cabins suddenly transformed into houses of glass, and filled with burning lamps, it might represent an Eskimo ice-village at night.

When our house was finished we took our summer tent, and, pitching it right against our house, used it as a storage-room. Here we put our provisions, our barrels of bread and molasses; and one story I must tell you about the latter. When the bitter cold

weather came on, and the molasses was frozen as hard as ice, the cook used to get ours in the same way that he would obtain so much ice; that is, he took a hatchet and chopped out lumps of it from the top of the barrel, and brought it in and put it over the fire, where it soon melted, so that we could use it. One day he left the hatchet on the frozen syrup, and when he needed it a few hours later, it was gone. Its disappearance was a great mystery, as the Eskimo never stole, and could not get into the tent in any case. The mystery, however, was cleared up the next day, when an iron bar with which he had been splintering off some of the frozen mass was left in the barrel, and we found that it sank in the frozen syrup until only the end stuck out. And when we had cut it

all out, we found the hatchet below, at the bottom. It seemed as absurd as to leave an ax on a frozen lake and to see it slowly sink through three or four feet of ice to the bottom.

We built no other house for ourselves than this mixture of ice-walls and snow-roof, though all the Eskimo built regular *igloos* of snow as soon as that material was in good condition; and when the bitter days of winter came on they always complained of cold when they came into our house.

The reason why we did not build a warmer house of snow was that we had planned to leave our home in North Hudson's Bay, and to pay a long visit to some whale-ships that were frozen in a harbor about a hundred miles farther south. There were four of these ships in a safe

little harbor jutting into the shore of Marble Island, and I will tell you the way in which the whalers prepare themselves for their stay in these vessels during the long Arctic winter. In the fall of the year, just before it gets so cold that the ice forms, they huddle their ships together as closely as possible, and each ship puts down two anchors, one at the bow and one at the stern, and these hold them from striking against the shore or one another until the ice forms around them and freezes them in solidly. Then the anchors and rudders are taken up, and, with lumber which they have brought from home, the whalers build a rude but substantial house over the ship. After that has been completed they get the Eskimo to build them a sort of snow-house or *igloo* over the wooden house again ; so, with all this covering to

protect them, they manage to keep warm and comfortable with very little fire, however cold it may be out-of-doors. Sometimes they put in double windows, the inside ones of glass, as usual, and the outside ones being made of slabs of ice, like the curious windows of the *igloos*.

The white men do not live in the temporary houses built on top of the ships, but in the cabin and forecastle, just as if they were cruising out to sea. The house is simply put over the ship to keep the real places warm, and right well it does its work. This "house," however, is very useful as a place for taking exercise, for ship-carpentering work, and for any small jobs that may be necessary. The Eskimo also congregate there, especially about meal-time; and the more generous whalers feed

them with a little hard sea-bread and weak tea well sweetened with molasses, and for this the natives supply them with reindeer and walrus meat, and build the snow-houses over their ships.

But you must not think that all ships in the Arctic winters fare so well as those I have just described. The whalers visit the polar regions nearly every winter, and know by experience how to be comfortable when there. Where they find whales they almost always find Eskimo, and the natives are of great assistance to them, as I have said. Many explorers, however, push beyond these limits, and we are constantly reading of their useless sufferings while in winter-quarters from not knowing how to properly shield and maintain themselves.

While in the fall the whalers patiently wait for the ice to form, so as to house themselves in, they do not in the spring wait for the ice to melt before getting to work catching whales that are sporting on the outside of the still frozen harbors; so they cut a channel, wide enough for the ship, through the ice from the open water to alongside the vessel, and she is then floated out. In the harbor at Marble Island, the work of cutting a channel only half a mile long occupied three weeks, each crew working six hour, night and day. But, as you probably know already, the night is as light as the day, in the Arctic spring.